

September 30, 2008

TO: Cheryl Shanburn

FROM: Teresa Parsons
Director's Review Program Supervisor

SUBJECT: Cheryl Shanburn v. Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)
Allocation Review Request ALLO-07-097

On September 4, 2008, I conducted a Director's review conference at the Department of Personnel, 2828 Capitol Boulevard, Olympia, Washington, concerning the allocation of the following PBX and Telephone Operator positions at Western State Hospital:

JoNell Broumley	Position #SZ91
Jamel Brown	Position #EM05
Grace Cornelious	Position #EH96
Angela Jackson	Position #ED47
Andrea Mikelson	Position #ED48
Tabatha Murphy	Position #SJ88
Cheryl Shanburn	Position #ED51
Rose Sotelo	Position #ED49

The following employees were present at the Director's review conference: JoNell Broumley; Jamel Brown; Andrea Mikelson; Cheryl Shanburn; and Rose Sotelo. Communications Manager Wendy Alderson, the employees' second-line supervisor, also participated in the conference. Bob Swanson from DSHS's Classification and Compensation Unit represented DSHS.

Director's Determination

This position review was based on the work performed for the six-month period prior to September 10, 2007. As the Director's designee, I carefully considered all of the documentation in the file, the exhibits presented during the Director's review conference, and the verbal comments provided by all parties. Based on my review and analysis of

your assigned duties and responsibilities, I conclude your position is properly allocated to the PBX and Telephone Operator classification.

Background

On September 10, 2007, DSHS's Classification and Compensation Unit received the Position Description Form (PDF) for your position (#ED51) in which you requested reallocation to the Communications Officer 1 classification. Subsequent to your request, Mr. Swanson performed a job audit. By letter dated September 17, 2007, Classification and Compensation Manager Pamela Pelton informed you that your position was properly allocated to the PBX and Telephone Operator classification. Specifically, Ms. Pelton determined your position fit the PBX and Telephone Operator classification because the class had specifically been established for positions working in communication centers within an institution, teaching hospital, or medical center. While Ms. Pelton indicated you did not meet the desirable qualifications, skills and abilities of the Communications Officer 1 class, Mr. Swanson clarified that your position did not meet the definition of the Communications Officer 1 class.

On October 12, 2007, the Department of Personnel received your request for a Director's review of DSHS's allocation determination.

The following summarizes your perspective as well as your employer's:

Summary of Ms. Shanburn's Perspective

You assert you have the skills and abilities and that your position meets the definition of the Communications Officer 1 classification. You contend that while some of the wording may be slightly different, you perform work consistent with the majority of typical work examples identified by the Communications Officer 1 class. You assert your position is the first point of contact when emergencies occur at Western State Hospital and state you have responsibility for notifying the 911 call center (Fire Com) and relaying accurate information so Fire Com can determine the level of care and the urgency of the response. In addition to receiving emergency calls, you state that you monitor the Security Escort Personnel Alarm System, which can be triggered by a staff member wearing an alarm pendant for the purpose of activating the alarm when imminent danger is present. You assert you communicate with security personnel on hospital grounds and inform security where and when to meet emergency responders to escort them to the location of an incident. You state you also serve as a check and balance point when an "unauthorized leave" occurs (when a patient leaves the grounds or is unaccounted for) and ensure law enforcement receives proper communication. In summary, you believe the Communications Officer 1 classification better describes the duties and level of responsibility assigned to your position.

Summary of DSHS's Reasoning

DSHS acknowledges you play a vital role in relaying critical information to 911 call center staff. However, DSHS contends your responsibilities for receiving and transmitting information concerning security, safety, medical, or behavioral situations fall within the full scope of duties outlined in the PBX and Telephone Operator classification. Similarly, DSHS contends your duties and responsibilities of implementing and escalating emergency notifications and using multiple communications methods (telephone, two-way radio, and computer) are consistent with the PBX and Telephone Operator class. DSHS asserts your role regarding emergency situations is to relay information and messages, facilitating the exchange between ward staff and the 911 operator. As such, DSHS contends your position has not been tasked with the dispatching duties and responsibilities assigned to Communication Officer 1 positions that directly dispatch emergency and law enforcement personnel. DSHS emphasizes that the PBX and Telephone Operator classification is specifically indented for positions handling calls, including emergencies, within an institution, teaching hospital, or medical center. DSHS asserts prior Personnel Appeals Board (PAB) decisions support allocating positions to a particular class when the positions were specifically created to perform the duties addressed in that class. As evidence, DSHS cites *Sorensen v. DSHS, ALLO-04-0020* and *Gessini, et al. v. DSHS, ALLO-04-0012*. DSHS believes your position is properly allocated to the PBX and Telephone Operator class.

Rationale for Director's Determination

The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a measurement of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which that work is performed. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a particular position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a determination of the class that best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position. Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

Duties and Responsibilities

The PDF summarizes the scope of your position as follows (Exhibit C-3 and F-1):

This position serves as an operator in an emergency communications center. This position transmits, receives and relays routine and emergency information to and from hospital emergency response personnel, law enforcement authorities, the fire department and county enforcement agencies by means of two-way radio, multi-line telephone systems, computer terminals, PA Systems and other communication devices. The

information relayed may concern any type of emergency or threat to hospital or public safety.

During the Director's review conference, both parties confirmed the communications center is located in the main lobby of Western State Hospital (WSH) and two positions staff the communications center for each shift except the night shift, when one position is on duty. There are two stations within the communications center. One position staffs the front reception area and handles incoming calls and visitors while the other handles all emergency calls and situations. The two positions rotate midway through the shift; however, both positions may deal with emergency situations at any time during the shift as the need arises.

On the PDF, the majority of duties (60%) involve emergency communications, which can be summarized as follows:

- Responsible for transmitting, receiving and relaying emergency calls and information using several communications systems and devices to and from WSH emergency response personnel, law enforcement, fire department, and county enforcement agencies.
- Provide vital link between victims and needed help. Types of emergency calls may involve reports of assaults, rape allegations, traffic accidents, riots, fire, medical emergencies, bomb threats, suspicious mail, traffic violations, or stolen vehicles. Responsible for escalating emergency notification as situation demands.
- Operate radio console to provide dispatch services to and from campus security, hand held and mobile units, CFS (Center for Forensic Services) security and ward radio units.
- Dispatch police, fire medical aid, medical staff, maintenance staff, safety officer or WSH management as situation dictates.

During the Director's review conference, the parties clarified that police, fire, or ambulance dispatching means calling 911.

- Handle all 911 calls for WSH and dispatch help, keeping caller on the line and obtaining information to relay to 911 operator.
- Dispatch fire unit when alarm is activated.
- Monitor Personnel Alarm System Central Computer for emergencies reported from employees wearing alarm pendants. Dispatch WSH emergency response using PA system, radio, pagers, or telephone (Calling a Code Green).

- Maintain current status of campus security units and log dispatches to and from dispatch center.
- Assign case numbers for incidents and tag all recorded calls on the emergency line to correspond with case numbers.
- Enter tag numbers into computer system (Stancil Digital Recording system).
- Call or fax law enforcement to report “unauthorized leave” of patient and escalate the notification if the patient is a danger to self or others, a “jail hold”, or sexual/kidnapping or violent offender.
- Notify liaison to DSHS Victim Witness Notification Program or other interested parties, if patient is on such a list. Also notify parties when patient is returned.
- Participate in disaster drills.

During the Director's review conference, the parties clarified that *dispatching services* meant dispatching WSH personnel on hospital grounds in response to any number of issues, as indicated above. Your position also dispatches WSH security to meet emergency responders such as Lakewood or Steilacoom police or fire at a designated location on WSH grounds to escort the emergency responders to the appropriate building. While your position calls 911, your position is not responsible for dispatching local emergency responders outside of WSH grounds. Rather, your position provides pertinent information obtained from ward staff or WSH personnel initiating the call to you, which you then relay to the 911 operator. An example of this type of exchange recorded from the emergency line is included (Exhibit E). In addition, the Operator Information book references the procedures to be followed when emergencies occur, which all parties agreed becomes “automatic” once you learn your position (Exhibit F-5). For medical emergencies, your position utilizes a Medical Emergency Call Checklist to obtain vital information; however, you are also required to use independent judgment to relay accurate information to the 911 operator (Exhibit G).

Comparison of Duties to Communications Officer 1

The definition of the Communications Officer 1 classification reads as follows:

Serves as a senior operator in a communications center, public safety or law enforcement station, emergency system network and mobile unit, or rescue and fire protection agency. Positions transmit, receive, and relay information concerning public safety and law enforcement activities to, from, and between State Patrol mobile units and stations, other state, county, and federal law enforcement agencies, and the public by means of

radio, multi-line telephone systems, computer terminals, private line intercom systems, and other telecommunications devices.

Positions allocated to this classification transmit, receive, and relay information concerning public safety activities to, from, and between *State Patrol mobile units and stations and other law enforcement*. Your position has not been assigned the responsibility of relaying information directly to and from State Patrol mobile units or stations and other law enforcement.

Further, while examples of typical work identified in a class specification do not form the basis for an allocation, they lend support to the work envisioned within a classification. The typical work identified in the Communications Officer 1 class include duties such as providing dispatch services to and from communication centers and mobile units; receiving communications and evaluating and disseminating reports of accidents or crimes; dispatching ambulance or fire department; using a computer to obtain information such as vehicle registration or driver's licenses; or maintaining the status of mobile units. Communications Officer 1 positions typically work for the Washington State Patrol or other enforcement agencies.

Although some of your duties may be similar or overlap with the Communications Officer 1 class, your position has not been tasked with directly dispatching or communicating information to Washington State Patrol mobile units or other enforcement agencies. Instead, you provide information through a 911 operator during emergency situations. Therefore, the Communications Officer 1 class is not the appropriate classification for your position.

Comparison of Duties to PBX and Telephone Operator

The definition of the PBX and Telephone Operator classification reads:

Serving an institution, teaching hospital, or medical center, receives and routes incoming calls through private branch telephone exchange (PBX) or other telephone switching system, and is responsible for receiving and transmitting to staff information concerning security, safety, medical or behavioral situations requiring immediate investigative or corrective action.

The distinguishing characteristics include the following:

Positions in this class are expected to exercise independent judgment when dealing with emergent situations which are not specifically covered by procedure, the usual methods of solution, or instructions by the supervisor. Within established guidelines, provides multiple communications services such as campus radio dispatching, personal alarm system, emergency

digital voice recording system, paging system, public address system, and intercom system. Responsible for implementing and escalating emergency notifications as the situation demands.

The duties and responsibilities assigned to your position meet the definition and distinguishing characteristics of the PBX and Telephone Operator class. Your position is responsible for receiving and transmitting information concerning security, safety, medical or behavioral situations involving patients and staff that require immediate attention. You use independent judgment when faced with emergency situations and call 911 when necessary. You also use a variety of methods to communicate emergencies including campus radio, public address system to call certain codes, including a code green in response to an alarm from the personal alarm system worn by staff. You also implement and escalate emergency notification when required.

The typical work statements of the PBX and Telephone Operator class most in line with your position's duties and responsibilities include the following:

- Operates Private Branch Exchange (PBX); receives and answers all campus-wide 911 calls; and places long distance, collect, toll free, bill-to, credit, SCAN (State Controlled Area Network) and other calls; transfers calls between extensions; maintains call logs and records;
- Operates MEDCON (Medical Consult) call directors; responsible for monitoring alarms and test data; transfers calls as appropriate; maintains records and statistics related to MEDCON calls;
- Operates local two-way radio base station or two-way radio transmitter to transmit information; issues hand-held two-way radios to authorized staff; issues radio batteries and/or operates ancillary battery charging equipment;
- Receives, alerts and transmits to staff information concerning security, missing residents, safety, medical or behavioral situations requiring investigation or corrective action; alerts local authorities as appropriate; relays information between local authorities and staff;
- Monitors fire, intrusion and/or other alarm systems; notifies security, staff and/or local authorities of alarm activation; monitors alarm systems;
- Programs and operates paging system to locate individuals, passes information or announces incoming calls;
- Maintains locator files; provides directory services; assists callers in locating proper departments, offices or individuals by determining the nature of business involved;

- Receives and directs public; gives information to visitors or callers pertaining to procedures and/or on-campus activities.

During the Director's review conference, you and the other employees raised concerns about your positions not merging with the Communications Officer 1 class during DOP's class consolidation. Specifically, you contend the PBX and Telephone Operator positions at WSH should have been consolidated with the Communications Officer 1 class like positions in the former Emergency Communications Operator higher education class. However, WAC 357-49-010(4) states, in relevant part, that employees "may not request a director's review of . . . [a]llegations arising from the development and adoption of the classification plan under the provisions of WAC [357-10-020](#)." Instead, there is a specific process by which state employers submit class proposals, which may also go through the Labor Relations Office negotiation process.

It is clear your position plays an important role in communicating emergency situations that arise at WSH. A position's allocation, however, is not based on an evaluation of performance or an individual's ability to perform higher-level work. Rather, it is based on the majority of work assigned to a position. Based on the duties and responsibilities assigned to your position, the PBX and Telephone Operator classification best describes your position, # ED51.

Appeal Rights

RCW 41.06.170 governs the right to appeal. RCW 41.06.170(4) provides, in relevant part, the following:

An employee incumbent in a position at the time of its allocation or reallocation, or the agency utilizing the position, may appeal the allocation or reallocation to . . . the Washington personnel resources board Notice of such appeal must be filed in writing within thirty days of the action from which appeal is taken.

The address for the Personnel Resources Board is 2828 Capitol Blvd., P.O. Box 40911, Olympia, Washington, 98504-0911.

If no further action is taken, the Director's determination becomes final.

c: Bob Swanson, DSHS
Lisa Skriletz, DOP

Enclosure: List of Exhibits